

MEMOIR
OF
REV. PAUL COUCH

BX
7260
C68
D56
1858
GTU
Storage

LIBRARY
1828

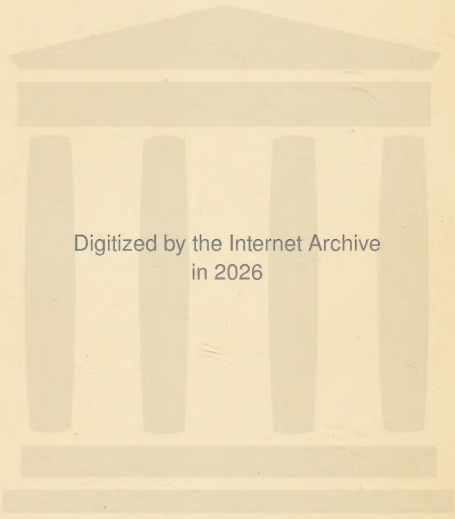
Pacific Theological Seminary.

ALCOVE,

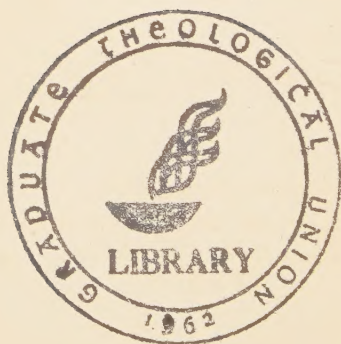
SHELF,

Presented by

Ernest Forster-Loss



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026



A BRIEF MEMOIR

OF

REV. PAUL COUCH:

AN UNUSUAL SUFFERER.

BY REV. L. F. DIMMICK, D. D.,
PASTOR OF THE NORTH CHURCH, NEWBURYPORT.

“Who best
Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best.”
Milton, Sonnets, xix.

NEWBURYPORT;
MOULTON & CLARK, 29 MARKET SQUARE.

Newburyport Herald Press—3 State st.

1858.

BX

7260

C68

D56

1858

~~41~~
C8/3D

“ Charteris, [a Scotch divine,] lived to a great age, and died in the end of the year 1700, having in his last years suffered unspeakable torment from the stone, which the operators would not venture to cut. But all that saw WHAT HE SUFFERED, AND HOW HE BORE IT, ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IN HIM THEY SAW A MOST PERFECT PATTERN OF PATIENCE AND SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF GOD.” — *Bp. Burnet.*



BRIEF MEMOIR, &c.

CHAPTER I.

“ I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.”—Acts 9 : 16.

A HUMAN LIFE, well begun, well conducted, and well closed, is the noblest thing below the skies. It matters not so much as is sometimes imagined, in what particular line of duty that life is employed. He that sweeps the street may be as worthy of honor as he who guides the state. He that *suffers* the will of God, bearing calamities rightly, may be as deserving of commendation, and as useful in the scene of things of which he forms a part, as he who does the highest exploits in active service.

The *USES* of *suffering*, in the economy of the world, are often not duly considered.

The objects to be accomplished by *suffering* are probably quite as great and as valuable as those which are to be accomplished by *action*.

The sufferer himself, who suffers rightly, is always benefited by what he endures. Even of the greatest Sufferer the world has ever seen—the world's Redeemer—it is said that he “learned obedience by the things which he suffered;” and again, that it became the Infinite One, “in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” In such respects as the Humanity of the Redeemer could receive maturing, and strength, and qualification for his great work—in such respects as he could be brought to have a deeper sympathy with his people in their wants and trials—a greater adaptedness to their nature and condition, and many branches of the work he was to perform for them—this object was accomplished, extensively, by his sufferings. “Touched with the feeling of our infirmities,” it is said; and the more as he “was

in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

In this he was, in an important sense, an example for his people ; an illustration, indeed, of a process which is still more appropriate — and even necessary — in regard to them. Human nature, in its sinful, rugged and wayward state, could hardly be expected to be subdued, reclaimed, purified, and raised up to a life of holiness and meetness for heaven, without a discipline made up, in part, at least, of suffering. And very manifest it is, in the experience of the church, that some of the choicest affections that even a sanctified humanity ever exhibits,— some of the finest, purest, and most impressive developements it ever makes,— are, through grace, produced by processes of suffering ; as "*the crushed flower gives forth the sweetest fragrance.*" Such is the law. God "chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness."

There is a public benefit, also, from suffering, as well as a private. Most eminently was this the case in respect to the Savior.

He suffered, indeed, as no one of his disciples, and no other being but Himself, can suffer. He suffered as an Atoning Sacrifice for the sins of men. He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree." He "gave himself a ransom for all." He was "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." In this his great work — the chief work for which he came into the world — no one can have a share with him. It is his alone.

But besides this, there is a public benefit from his sufferings, in which his people can bear some resemblance to him. In his sufferings shine with special effulgence, some of the brightest features of a perfect holiness. His resignation, his patience, his forgiveness of injuries, his prayer for his murderers, and, in general, his meekness and fortitude amidst the contradictions he met with, and amidst the waves of sorrow that rolled over him, — these things are an example for all time. They are a great means of teaching the world many of the prime elements of a true godliness. Take away the

LIFE of Christ, and leave only his naked teachings, and the gospel is deprived of no small part of its power to impress and move men. And a large share of the power of the Life of Christ is contained in the *sufferings* it included.

And in this aspect of the case, disciples have responsibility, as well as Christ himself. As an apostle has expressed it:—“Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps.” And another apostle, in still stronger terms:—“Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and FILL UP THAT WHICH IS BEHIND OF THE AFFLICTIONS OF CHRIST, in my flesh, for his body’s sake, which is the church.” Even the sufferings of Christ did not constitute the whole amount of suffering needful for the church’s welfare — needful for the illustration of truth, and the power of grace — needful for the carrying out of the gospel to its designed consummation. There are the *left behind*, things lacking, to be done by his disciples. Resignation, and patience, and forgiveness of injuries, and

prayer for enemies, and, in general, meekness and fortitude amidst contradictions and burdens of sorrow — sometimes heavy and long continued scenes of anguish and pain — these are to be acted over again, in all times and all places, for the church's benefit and the world's benefit. And in very few ways do the disciples of Christ honor religion more, than by imitating their great Master in his example of suffering. The Martyrs are to be put in this category. A light has come down from their sufferings, which they could have transmitted in no other way ; in many respects, the brightest light of those early times. And so a light shines forth at this day, from many a chamber of sickness ; from many an instance of heroic endurance of protracted and heavy calamity ; from many a triumphant dying bed, — a light of the highest consequence to the life and power of religion among men. It strongly arrests attention, and produces a deep and wide-spread impression, favoring truth, and righteousness, and human salvation. The sufferers in the kingdom of God,

therefore, perform a work, who can say, of any less value, or moment, than the actors in the kingdom of God? Perhaps it is a more difficult service to render; but for this very reason, when rightly rendered, it may possess some peculiar preciousness in the sight of God, and receive from Him some peculiar recompense in the day when His awards are given.

To the former class — the sufferers — belonged the individual, whose case we are now briefly to consider. — And there is the more appropriateness in introducing the foregoing remarks in regard to suffering, in this place, as they are expressive of that view of the subject, which was ever very prominent with him; and from which he derived great consolation and support under the many severe pains appointed him, and heavy burdens laid upon him. To use, substantially, his own language; why should not some be appointed to *suffer* for the general good, as well as some appointed to *act* for the general good? Why should not *suffering* have its use, on the broad and

general scale, as well as action? And when he took this view of himself as a sufferer, he was comforted, and aided in bearing his burdens.

CHAPTER II.

“And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures.”—2 Tim. 3 : 15.

PAUL COUCH was born in Newburyport, (Mass.,) September 23rd, 1777. His parents were Joseph and Mary Couch, worthy citizens of the place. He was the third of ten children.

When an individual, in subsequent life, becomes distinguished in any way, we inquire with special interest in regard to his childhood and youth, looking to see a commencement marked with features foreshadowing what is to come. Of the early life of Mr. Couch, little is known of a *pecially* remarkable character. Yet some things it presents not unworthy of mention. He began life with an unusual degree of buoyancy and energy. A friend, writing of him, says: “His boyhood I well remember, having been

a schoolmate with him. He possessed a warm and ardent temperament ; was full of energy and sprightliness ; but was ever kind and obliging ; and, what may be specially noticed to his praise, was not addicted to any profane or improper language, or any immoral behavior. His temper and manners," continues this friend, "obtained for him influence among his associates, and did not a little to impart a tone of thought and feeling to the circle in which he moved." The bold, strong features of his character made him a sort of leader among those of his age.

Young Couch's early advantages for education were only those afforded by the common schools of his native town, which, though very good for that day, were yet much behind what are now enjoyed through the improvements introduced into the public school system. Still a mind like his could hardly fail to make good proficiency. He was brought up, too, in a sober and religious community, and received not a little religious instruction. His parents, though not

members of the church of Christ, were yet friends of good order; connected themselves and family with the public worship of God, and retained and cherished in their house many influences from the Bible and its ordinances. And from a child this son seems to have been a subject of occasional religious impressions.

At a suitable age, young Couch was apprenticed to the trade of a house-carpenter. While an apprentice, he became hopefully pious; though he did not make a public profession of religion till 1799, when he was twenty-two years of age: uniting then with the 4th church in his native town, under the pastoral care of Rev. Charles W. Milton.

Mr. Couch's early religious experience is presented in the following brief Narrative from his own hand, read to the church at the time of his admission as a member. Such was the practice.

“ TO THE INDEPENDENT CALVINIST CHURCH
IN NEWBURYPORT :—

“ SIRS :— Counting it a high privilege and duty of all the adopted children of God to join some branch of His church militant on earth, in order to partake with them of the mutual intercourse in the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and keep up a remembrance of Christ, and hoping the Lord has done one of his greatest works for me, I would, after mentioning some part of what I humbly trust have been his dealings with my soul, offer myself to your charitable acceptance.

“ When going on careless and unconcerned in the sports of giddy youth, I was, at about the age of 13 years, much affected with certain words of the Psalmist. My feelings I cannot well describe. The pangs were keen, but short. They soon wore off, and I returned to my former practice, flattering myself that if I lifted up a cry to God in my old age, or on a dying bed, he would save me, because I was not so bad as some others. Some time after this, I was visited

with sickness, and brought apparently to death's door. But though, through the signal mercy of God, I recovered, I thought not on his kindness, but still went on in my sinful and rebellious course. But not long after, having my eyes opened in some measure, I saw what an awful sinner I had been. I saw that I was justly condemned, and that if I died in this condition, I was undone for ever. I betook myself to duties to recommend me to God and gain his favor. Having proceeded some time thus, I thought God was under obligation to save me. But soon after, having the enmity of my heart and corruption of my nature discovered to me, I found all the duties I had done were defective. They were not of love: but sin still reigned in my soul. Being thus cut off from all hope, I knew not what to do, but lay trembling as before the jaws of death and hell, which seemed opened to receive me. Being commanded to look to Christ and believe on him, I think I was, by experience, convinced that I could help myself no more by the Gospel, than by the Law.

No tongue can tell the distress I was now in. Though hell was not the place of my residence, yet it seemed to move before me, and towards me. And O the torments of my awakened conscience ! Will the excruciating pains of a man on the rack serve as a comparison ? Methinks the latter is to the former, as the shadow to the substance. But though my state was thus forlorn, yet I was convinced from the word of God, that Christ was *able* to save me, if he *would* : for he "*quickeneth whom he will.*" Now my anxiety was great to get an interest in Christ, though I doubted much his willingness to save me, because I was so great a sinner. Yet I could not help crying, "Mercy, Lord, for thine own sake !" thus continuing to plead at the footstool of sovereign grace. I was at last almost driven to despair. In this state, I felt myself moved to go to the Bible : which I took, and opened, and cast my eyes on these words, in the 2d chapter of Hosea, 20th verse, "I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness ; and thou shalt know the Lord." These words

came to me, I trust, with the sweet constraining power of the Holy Ghost. I felt transported at the thought of knowing God, and my whole soul was filled with joy and praise. Since then, I have been down and up, sometimes doubting whether I was united to the blessed Jesus, and sometimes fearing the Lord would leave and forsake me. But, thanks be to God, he has, I hope, now and then caused his blessed Spirit to visit me, to exert his influences upon my spirit, and bring his precious word and promises to my remembrance ; so that it has caused my hard heart, in some measure, as I hope, to gush out in streams of love and desires towards him. And now I think I can say, from the bottom of my heart, that, "whereas I was once blind, now I see" a little. "My hope is in Christ."

PAUL COUCH.

Mr. Couch's religion did not lead him to undervalue his secular duties, but made him more attentive to all their claims upon him. "In his labors and business," says the friend

before quoted, "he was remarkably industrious, upright, conscientious, and faithful to his employers, and was esteemed a good workman at his trade."

Even before his connexion with the church, however, and before the close of his apprenticeship, the natural ardor of his character began strikingly to manifest itself in the new direction which his thoughts and feelings had now assumed — in the new life he had now begun to live. A young convert, he was at once very earnest and active in the services of religion, and, especially, ere-long, in exhortations and prayers in small religious meetings. As a good lady, who had well known him, expressed it: "He was an independent, sprightly, high-spirited youth; and when he was converted, he turned it all into religion."

"The Great Reformation," as it has been called, which occurred in the place about the time now mentioned, was a scene in which Mr. Couch took a very active part.

The year 1800, with portions of the subsequent year, is referred to frequently by

some of our aged Christians, as a very remarkable time for the outpouring of God's Spirit on this community. Numbers, still with us, trace their first religious impressions and the beginning of their hopes, to that period. Some of the churches, as appears from their records, received then, and shortly afterwards, very great accessions to their numbers. And among the instruments in promoting this work, none were more conspicuous than Mr. Couch. Some speak of his labors particularly as the means blessed to their spiritual welfare. His zeal knew no bounds. While engaged daily in his ordinary occupation, he was accustomed, at this period, to rise early, and commence labor before the usual hour, that he might gain time for religious services and meetings, the after part, or evening of the day. That he might better qualify himself for these religious services, he was much engaged in the study of the Scriptures. He was accustomed frequently to have his Bible open before him while at his work, that he might cast his eye often upon its sacred

page, and render himself more familiar with its truth. Sometimes particular passages, written or printed, were tacked up on some post, or other conspicuous place, near his work-bench, that he might be aided thus in committing them to memory, or acquiring a fuller understanding of their import. All this was done, not only because he loved the truth, but with the further view, that he might be more effective and useful as an exhorter at the religious meetings which it was now his passion to attend.*

In 1797, a society was formed by a few young men, for religious purposes, of which Mr. Couch was one. At first, it consisted of only *five* members ; afterwards of more,

* It is remarkable how knowledge is often sought, and obtained, amidst difficulties. Roger Saerman was accustomed to work, on his shoemaker's bench, with a book open before him.

Dr. Livingstone, the recent distinguished African Missionary and Explorer, while in a factory, in his youth, "placed a book on a portion of the spinning-jenny, so that," he says, "I could catch sentence after sentence as I passed at my work."

reaching at last the number of thirteen. It met weekly for prayer and conference. The members bound themselves by strict rules, to walk uprightly ; to seek to know the will of God, and do it ; and affectionately and faithfully to watch over one another. The measure could not but have been a great assistance to those engaged in it, in their early attempts to understand religious things, and to live the religious life.

In this society originated some schemes of benevolence, which, long after, were of benefit to the place. Particularly, says the friend repeatedly quoted, " here originated the first efficient movement for the instruction and improvement of the colored population in and about the town. Means were solicited and obtained, to establish a school for the colored children, and a regular Sabbath evening meeting for the adults. A colored schoolmaster was procured ; a building purchased, and removed to an appropriate location ; and for several years, a grant was obtained from the town to support the institution. — It was here," continues the

narrator, "that we ourselves learned to feel more than we had ever felt before, the evil of depriving the poor blacks of instruction and liberty. We felt that they had souls as precious as our own, and as capable of being made glorified spirits, as we hope some of them have already realized." Some other plans of beneficence were devised and carried forward by that little association of young men, "by which aid and instruction to the poor were imparted, both among the white and the colored people." In a poor and destitute place, some four miles from town, religious meetings were established, and for some time sustained, and other benefactions bestowed. In these things, the early mind of Mr. Couch is manifested. His mind, indeed, was the leading mind in the origination of the plans, and in their execution.

The following is a fuller statement of the revival of religion mentioned in the foregoing pages, and of Mr. Couch's connexion with it, along with the young men with whom he was associated.

“In the latter part of 1800,” continues the above named friend, “I recollect meeting Mr. Couch at Stratham, N. H., where I was visiting, and where there was then a revival of religion. There Mr. Couch’s heart received a new impulse of warm and ardent feeling, which he brought with him to his native town. During the autumn and early part of the winter of that year, Mr. Couch and his associates had kept up meetings in private houses in Newburyport. And after his return from Stratham, he became more conspicuous as a leader in such meetings. A particular scene on one of these occasions, I can never forget. It was in the last week of December, and I think on the last day of the year. On this occasion, the power of the Holy Spirit was manifested in a very remarkable manner. In the course of the meeting, many minds became deeply affected, and some were even stricken to the floor. This proved the beginning, the opening scene, of an extensive revival : one of the most powerful of any that had taken place in that community

after the days of Whitefield. It spread mostly through the town : meetings were multiplied, and it became the absorbing question with the impenitent, ' What shall I do to be saved ? ' and among the Christian portion of the community, ' What has God wrought ? ' Brother Couch was a leading spirit in all these movements. He had a fluency of speech, and a warm-hearted zeal, which greatly interested the people. Wherever he went, there was sure to be a crowded meeting. So deeply was the community moved, that it became a serious question, what should be done to regulate and compose the public feeling. Some of the pastors and leading members of the churches thought there were irregularities and indiscretions connected with these scenes." Particularly they objected to the late hours to which the meetings were often kept. It seemed to them also that the young and untaught were manifesting too much forwardness ; were assuming to be instructors and guides beyond what their qualifications fitted them for, and what the order and wel-

fare of the church would permit. It is not to be wondered at, that a young man of Mr. Couch's temperament should have been among those who were deemed to need some modifying, restraining influence.

"At length an arrangement was made between the pastors and the young men, to this effect: that the meeting-houses of the four Orthodox societies should be opened in rotation four or five evenings in the week, and that the young men should be invited to take part in the services at each meeting. This arrangement was continued for some time: the pastors occupying the pulpit, and opening the services by prayer and preaching, and the young men occupying the elders' seats below, and filling up the last half of the evening with prayer and exhortation. Many clergymen visited Newburyport during that period, and assisted in these public services. A good degree of harmony prevailed in the movements, the young men being regarded as auxiliaries, at least, in the great and good work."*

*Of this "great revival" some account was given,

Mr. Couch was all this time, notwithstanding his many religious labors, working still

shortly afterwards, by Rev. Mr. Milton, one of the pastors of the town, and Mr. Couch's pastor, at the time when the scene occurred. A portion of that communion the reader may be glad to see here — "Newburyport, Oct. 14, 1801. * * * I think I can now safely testify that we have had a glorious revival of religion in this town, especially among the people of my charge. Prior to this, it was a time of great deadness: for though the people of this town were very attentive to the Sabbath, and the public worship of God, yet but little of the power of religion was experienced, until God was pleased to dispose a number of young men, chiefly of my charge" — the young men mentioned above — "to open a number of private meetings in different parts of this town and vicinity. The most remarkable was Jan. 15, 1801, when, after a number of petitions had been fervently presented to God, in the name of Christ, for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, he was graciously pleased to answer: for the Spirit came down with invincible power; so that a number of poor sinners were brought to solemn consideration; they now saw what a holy God they had offended — what a perfect law they had transgressed — how just God would remain should he send them to hell; but they were not willing to be damned; they therefore cried for mercy. It was supposed that several persons were savingly changed: private Christians were called in to converse and pray with them; and as indisposition prevented me from being with them, they called in the Rev. Mr. Boddily.

at his trade as a carpenter. He began, however, in connexion with these scenes, to

This meeting lasted all night. — Jan. 16, I attended one of these private meetings, and preached from Isa. li : 22. God evidently was with us. Some could not keep silent during the exercises, but frequently cried out for mercy, while others were praising God for the sovereign triumphs of his free grace ; at the same time they exhorted sinners to flee to Christ for salvation. The private houses were now found too small to hold the people : so great was the attention of distressed souls, that with the advice of our elders I opened our meeting-house in the evening. The Rev. Mr. Boddily addressed the congregation ; one of the young men prayed ; and I preached from Prov. xiv : 32. Almighty power appeared to me to attend the word, so that it cut its way to the hearts of sinners ; and then such a scene was exhibited as I never saw nor heard before in public." He speaks of some outcries and demonstrations of feeling, more than would be deemed desirable at the present day : more, indeed, than would have been chosen by himself. He was " fearful that many would be prejudiced against the revival because of these" things. Some, he says, did " ascribe the whole to enthusiasm, and opposed " it. " For these reasons," he says, " after mildly requesting those that could, to keep silent while I was preaching and praying, which in general they did, I left the whole in the hands of God for him to take care of his own cause ; and blessed be God, I have no just cause to repent."

query, whether there was not a higher business for him to pursue. And, after consul-

He mentions another scene. "February 10, our church observed as a day of fasting and prayer, for the continuance of God's Spirit, &c. Rev. Mr. Boddily preached in the morning from John ix: 19. In the afternoon I preached from John iii: 7, 8. After I had done, the outcries were great, indeed, in different parts of the house; many were awakened and converted this afternoon by the blessed Spirit of God."

Of the character of this work, Mr. Milton says: "Those who have given good evidence of a real change from sin to holiness, ascribe all to sovereign grace — they had in general a short, but keen work of the law — they appear full of love to God, his word and ordinances, especially praying, hearing, reading, and singing; the souls of sinners appear to them of great worth, and in great danger; this leads them to frequent private prayer meetings, to pray for the conversion of them. Many of them have informed me that they were brought into a state of grace thus — they were brought to see the sinfulness of their lives and hearts, and here the fountain of original corruption was discovered — their guilt and helplessness was now clearly seen and felt — they were brought to see the justice of God should he cast them off forever — in fact, they were brought to despair of salvation by the law — they were brought to see the glory and sufficiency of Christ, as exhibited in the gospel — they were sweetly disposed and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ for all, in

tation with friends, and particularly with the late Dr. Spring, on whose ministry he about this time began to attend, and seeking the Divine guidance, he determined on relinquishing his secular pursuits, and becoming a preacher of the gospel.

As his education had been limited — only such as the common public schools afforded at that time — he resolved to study more, before entering upon his newly chosen work. In pursuance of this purpose, he passed several terms at Dummer Academy, at that pe-

order to grace and glory. Here is the foundation on which they build, the atonement and imputed righteousness of Christ — the complaints of the awakened were, their hard hearts, unbelief, enmity, ignorance. They sought relief by reading and hearing God's word, and by prayer. Our meetings were every night for some time. From the best information I can obtain, it is supposed that in this town and vicinity, one hundred and seventy souls have been born again, during the revival. A very large number belong to my charge — some have joined the church of Christ in full communion. April 9, we had added to our church twenty-nine, and June 24, seventeen more: there have been additions to other churches in this town. Thus I have endeavored to state facts, as far as I have been acquainted with this revival."

riod one of the best institutions of the kind in the country. This accomplished, he studied theology, first, with Rev. Dr. Woods, then of West Newbury ; afterwards, with Rev. Nathaniel Noyes, of West Newbury, East Parish ; and shortly after, was licensed by the Essex Middle, now Essex North Association, as a candidate for the Christian ministry. He preached his first sermon in the North Church in his native town, whose minister had become his chosen pastor, in 1802, when he was twenty-five years of age. He never was ordained : so that the term *Reverend* was applied to him only by courtesy ; a courtesy, however, well merited.

CHAPTER III.

“Whereas it was in [thy heart to build a house unto my name, thou didst well that it was in thy heart.— [I. Kings, viii : 18.

Mr. Couch, after being licensed, preached, occasionally, in several of the churches in his native place, and vicinity, for a short time : and in 1803, received a commission from the Massachusetts Missionary Society, to labor as a missionary in the State (then Province) of Maine. Canaan, and the surrounding region, on the Kennebec river, in Somerset county, was the chief scene of his labors ; though those labors extended sometimes farther east, even to the Penobscot river.

In this new sphere, Mr. Couch addressed himself to his duties with his characteristic ardor. He never knew how to be at rest. And now, having found the business, which,

above all others, he loved. he gave himself to it with all his heart. In the summer of the above mentioned year. he wrote to his employers : " I have been engaged 19 weeks in the service of the Massachusetts Missionary Society. Rode 706 miles. Preached 116 sermons. Made 63 family visits. Attended 2 funerals. Visited 7 sick persons. Attended 4 conferences, and 2 church meetings. Received 7 dolls. and 50 cents. for the benefit of the Society. I have endeavored to do what I could to promote the benevolent objects of the Society, and thereby advance the glorious cause of Christ." — *Mass. Miss. Mag. vol. ii. p. 101.*

His labors appear to have been well received, and to have made a deep and valuable impression on those among whom they were performed. " I have reason to believe," he adds, " that God in his abounding goodness, has aided my feeble endeavors, so far as to make them influential, in public and private, for the awakening of a number of souls, in different places, who, I have reason to hope, have been brought to the saving knowledge of the truth." — *Ib.*

In a letter from Mr. Couch to his friends,* dated Vassalborough, December 9, 1863, is some more particular development of his feelings amidst his work, and reference to the impressions his labors were making. "O brethren! keep near to the throne of grace; and do not forget your poor unworthy brother. Pray that I may be an instrument of building up the Savior's cause; and that I may see, and meet with you once more in this world, if it be the will of our precious Savior. But the will of the Lord be done. * * I preach 8 times a week. People come from all quarters to hear the poor child. They wonder, and I fear they will 'perish.' O that God would convert them! They yoke up their oxen, and bring in their families to hear the gospel. O brethren, again I entreat, pray for me!"

Mr. Couch, it will be seen, as in his former labors, so in these, was full of ardor. It was in his nature to need checks, oftentimes, rather than incitements. Hence the

* The young men with whom he had been associated.

quaint but significant caution which his pastor, Dr. Spring, gave him, as he was departing on his missionary tour :

“ Paul, Paul, first of all be sure you’re right ;

“ For when you run, you run with all your might.”

“ And this is the way,” as a friend has said, “ in which he did up all his work for God, and Christ, and souls. He did it with all his might.”

Further testimony to the nature and value of Mr. Couch’s missionary labors may be gathered from several sources.

In the Memoir of REV. JOTHAM SEWALL, —“ father Sewall,” the Patriarch Missionary of Maine — is the following paragraph : “ In Orrington [on the Penobscot] he found persons under serious impressions, whose attention had been arrested by the preaching of a Mr. Couch, who was laboring in that region under the auspices of the same Society with himself.” — *p.* 136.

From some of Mr. Couch’s early friends, reminiscences of him have been received of particular interest. The late Rev. Kiah

Bayley, of East Hardwick, Vt., writing of him a little before his own death, gives several items of this description. Mr. Bayley, at the time of his early acquaintance with Mr. Couch, was settled at New Castle, Lincoln county, Me. Mrs. Bayley was a Newburyport lady, and a particular friend of Mr. Couch. This brought Mr. C. often at their house. Mr. Bayley, being desired to give his recollections of Mr. Couch, and replying under date of July 18, 1857, says: "I should be glad to oblige you, and help my old friend [Couch] to speak to living men of the great salvation." Then, a few days later, July 22, he writes more at length: "Soon after he [Mr. Couch] came into Maine, he visited some old friends in Alna, and went up into Kennebec county, every where preaching the gospel with great zeal, urging sinners to repentance, and beseeching them day and night to become reconciled unto God."

Mr. Bayley continues, noticing the interest Mr. Couch's preaching awakened, the concern of some good men, at first, as to the

genuineness of the work he was performing, and the incipient disease which his excessive labors were thus early bringing upon himself : " He was ardent, and imprudent," he says, " and nature soon flagged. Colds neglected settled into rheumatism incurable. He was compelled to leave the field of his labors ; and he repaired to his friends at Alna.

He was not, however, long contented in his confinement. Though pressed with disease, he was soon again making some attempts in his favorite work. Mr. Bayley, in continuing his narrative, gives some graphic descriptions of Mr. Couch's preaching.

" In the winter," he says, " soon after he returned to Alna, I was told that Paul Couch had preached on the Sabbath at my meeting-house, and had appointed a third meeting at my dwelling-house. [Mr. B., it would seem, having been absent from his own place of worship on that day.] Good father McLean had heard him during the day, said the man appeared quite unwell,

and was so lame that he had to crawl up the pulpit stairs. The old Scotch divine," resumes Mr. Bayley, "the long-trying and faithful missionary who had for years labored in the new settlements in Maine, wished to hear the young evangelist from Newburyport, of whom he had heard reports widely different. He saw that he was crippled; but he soon found that he could yet wield both sword and spear; and resolved to let him work. 'The old warrior,'—so Mr. B. expresses it,—“was pleased, and hastened to report, [to bear tidings to Mr. B. the pastor.] As the pastor's house was two miles from the meeting-house, and Mr. Couch was feeble, he did not arrive for some time. But when he did arrive, he found the people gathered and waiting for him. 'The little assembly heard, and listened to the message, with deep interest. The text chosen was Acts v. first clause of 2d verse,—‘And kept back part of the price.’ Feeble as the preacher was, he spoke with energy and power, and direct application.” In Mr. B.'s spirited language, pointing out

the character of the sermon : " While pouring grape-shot upon sinners, ' who are ready, under conviction, to part with many things for Christ, but cannot give up *all*,' he threw a bomb-shell at those Christians, who profess to give up all, but kept back their children, the most precious part ; who lay down what cost them nothing—say they have given up all, but reserve their children—will not give their children to God, who claims *them* specially as his. [Are there not too many in the church, who keep back thus a part more precious than gold?] Mr. McLean heard the lecture that evening, and ever after manifested a cordial respect for the young apostle, and was ready to give unto him the right hand of fellowship."

This "good father McLean" was the "Rev. Alexander McLean," who was born in Scotland about the middle of the last century. He was educated at the University of Aberdeen, and was a talented as well as learned divine. In his early life he emigrated to this country, and was installed as the first pastor of the Congregational church

at Bristol, Lincoln county, Maine, July 4, 1773 ; and died January 11, 1868, at the age of 64.

“ The church at Bristol was limited in numbers and feeble in resources. Hence Mr. McL., early in his pastorate, engaged, a portion of the time, in missionary labors, and travelled extensively over many parts of the State. He greatly aided the late Father Sewall in the organization of many of the churches in new and destitute places, and was thus greatly beloved, and highly useful.

“ Some of the people of Bristol emigrating to this region [the north-western part of Kennebec Co.]* he often visited it, and did much to lay the foundations of truth and righteousness among us on a solid basis. He was a sound, and discreet, doctrinal and instructive preacher, and had his catechetical and theological classes of young people,

* These items have been kindly furnished by the Rev. Isaac Rogers, of Farmington, Me., to whom grateful acknowledgements are here rendered.

that issued in the hopeful and vigorous piety and steadfast faith of most of them. Those of them in this region who have died, lived the lives and died the death of the righteous : and those of them who remain unto the present time, are " looking for the mercy of God unto eternal life," being " ready to depart and be with Christ, which is far better."

Such was the man, to whose searching scrutiny the young evangelist was subjected ; by whose sound and thorough judgment, the character, doctrine and talent of the young aspirant, and the nature of the work he was doing, were estimated. The result was most satisfactory.

Mr. Bayley, having spoken of the strong friendship which sprung up between these two earnest and devoted servants of Christ, exclaims " Dear men ! They have long since met in a better land, where sufferings for Christ and his cause will be rewarded with crowns and thrones by those hands that were pierced on Calvary, that all his people might reign on Mount Zion !"

And since the above sentence was penned by Mr. Bayley, with the preceding notices of Mr. Couch, the author of them has himself joined the same great assembly. The public papers have announced "the death of the Rev. Kiah Bayley, which took place at his residence in East Hardwick, on the 17th of August, 1857, at the age of 87 years. He formerly labored in Maine, and was one of the fathers of Bangor Seminary." The "fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?"

Mr. Bayley retained, in a remarkable degree, for a man of his years, his mental clearness and sprightliness. To some enquiries made of him respecting Mr. Couch's missionary labors, by the compiler of this Memoir, he answered with great promptness — the very next day — observing, even playfully, "I hasten to reply, as I have never allowed myself to *wait* for the *last* bell." Subsequently, he gave a description of himself, as under a load of infirmities, marked yet with a terseness, vivacity, raciness, truly worthy of observation. "A recluse — sel-

dom go to the door — feeble, palsy hanging over me — shattered brain ; yet suffer little pain — slide along, read, write a little, should not — a wreck — unprofitable — thankful if my Master will give me a lodging in his kitchen.” This, but some four weeks previous to his departure to other scenes : in spirit and manner, not a little like his friend Couch, of whom he had been so approvingly speaking.

“ After a few days’ sojourn at Newcastle,” to quote Mr. Bayley’s concluding remarks, “ Mr. Couch left a good name with us, and returned to Alna, where he preached one private lecture, and took his bed at the house of his friends, Mr. D. Carton and family, hoping that under their kind nursing he would soon be able to take the field again. But no : the young giant was too deeply wounded to rise. There he was chained. It was, I think, more than a year before he was able to return to his home.” Yet, even in confinement, he was not useless. He “ preached to all who came to his lodgings, and left a good impression on the minds

of saints and sinners. His 'light did so shine, that others saw it, and were constrained to glorify God.' "

" Mr. Couch had a good voice, spoke with power, as one having authority, and a divine power seemed to attend his messages. He was, in a word, no ordinary man. In a short period, he rose from a humble situation, and took a high position among learned divines. Had he been allowed to labor in the field, he would, without question, have proved himself a sound, able, and popular preacher, bold as a lion, and mighty through God to the pulling down of the strong holds of Satan. But such was not God's design. He had appointed him another field of conflict, where he battled long and manfully."

Mr. Couch often had an originality of manner, and a pointedness of expression, which not a little increased his attractiveness as a preacher. Among the anecdotes related of him, is the following, illustrative of the point in question. As he was prosecuting his missionary work, in the new settlements, and making deep impressions by his own

labors, he met sometimes with strong excitement arising from other causes. People called NEW LIGHTS, were scattered through many places. These people attended extensively on his meetings, and, by endeavoring to introduce their own irregularities, occasioned him no small annoyance. On one occasion, he came in contact, as a friend has expressed it, "with one of those wild, hurricane revivals," which this people labored to produce, in which there was not only groaning, shouting and clapping, but jerking, leaping, screaming, swooning, falling into trances, &c. Mr. C. was invited to preach, and after some hesitation consented. He took for his text, Acts xix: 13—15: "Then certain vagabond Jews," &c. He introduced the subject historically, and at some length, making prominent the last verse, "The evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye?" and then drew from the whole this doctrine; *Some professed servants of Christ have such a strange way of doing things, that even the devil himself don't know what to make*

of them." [How he applied his subject, we are not informed; but we may presume with the same bold grasping hand which seemed shadowed forth by the text itself.]

Rev. D. M. Mitchell, now City Missionary in Barbours, after leaving the Theological Seminary (Andover) in 1814, labored for a short time as missionary in Maine, on a part of the same field where Mr. Couch's early missionary labors had been bestowed. Mr. Mitchell bears testimony harmonious with that which has gone before. He speaks of Mr. Couch's having left upon all the region the impress of his "indefatigable zeal." "He was often," he says, "referred to as a pattern of ministerial zeal and fidelity; as one who spared not himself. Night and day, in the coldest season of the winter, he preached in crowded school-houses, and in private dwellings, till his blood often became greatly heated; and then by exposure in going perhaps some miles to his lodgings, he laid the foundation of the illness that followed. The people called him *Boanerges*. He was hated, indeed, by the enemies of the

truth ; but was greatly beloved by Christians ; and souls not a few were given him as seals of his ministry. Mrs. Mitchell recollects his preaching at her father's house — Gen. Crosby's, of Hampden, Me. — She says, he was considered then a second Whitefield, and great numbers flocked to hear him. Two, at least, then members of her father's family were believed to be savingly benefited by his preaching."

These things exhibited sufficiently the spirit with which Mr. Couch entered upon and prosecuted his short missionary work. The one thought of preaching the gospel filled his mind. He laid himself on the altar, for God's service and glory, and labored in all things to "make full proof of his ministry."

CHAPTER IV.

"I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.—[Isa. xlviii: 10.

But the light in which Mr. Couch is mainly to be viewed is that of a *sufferer*.

In previous years, even in his youth, he had been afflicted, at times, with rheumatic tendencies and complaints. In one instance, a severe rheumatic fever had made some inroads upon his general health. His late hours, and early hours, and vigils, in the zeal of his first love, could not but leave some effects behind. And the labors and exposures of his missionary life, were fearfully suited to bring on the grand result that ensued.

After the severe illness at Alna, related in the preceding chapter, he did indeed so far recover as to be able to preach a few times, and to revive the hope that he might yet be permitted to resume his labors. In

the summer succeeding, (1804,) he preached sparingly, in New Milford, in the neighborhood of Alna, and seems to have spent a part of the summer in that place. And the people of Canaan, among whom a large share of his missionary labors had been performed, had hopes of his restoration : in which case, they were desirous of his settlement with them as their minister. Dr. Spring, being consulted in regard to the matter, wrote Mr. Couch in reply : " There appears no prospect of your going [to Canaan] at present. * * But it is hoped you will recruit ; and I hope you will settle yet. * * I can freely and heartily recommend you to the people of Canaan, if they will promise one thing, and fulfil that promise, viz. : that they will not suffer you to labor too much. God bless you, and succeed you in the great work."

But the flickering hopes Mr. Couch cherished, that he should be well again, were intermingled with many fears. His sun had scarcely risen, ere it was obscured by clouds. His future appeared to him dark and

gloomy. "I would gladly have done more," he said, "if health and strength had allowed." In a letter, dated New Milford, Aug. 6, 1804, addressed to the society of young men, his former associates, he says: "You won't forget me in your prayers, and I hope I shall not forget you. God, I fear, is angry with *me*: and, O brethren, what shall I do? 'When I suffer his terrors, I am distracted.' But 'though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.' " The lesson of *suffering*, with his temperament, was a hard lesson to learn.

In the autumn of this year, he returned again to his home, where, what he had feared began to be more fully realized. His home soon became, in a sense, his prison: where, for thirty-eight years, with very little exception, he was confined to his house; and for twenty-eight years, entirely to his chamber. During some of the earlier of these years, he made occasionally an effort to get abroad. In 1807, he was, with difficulty, conveyed to Saratoga Springs, in hope of advantage from the waters there,

but returned without benefit. In 1811 he was conveyed to Reading, (Mass.) some twenty-five miles from his home, to try the practice of an eminent physician residing there. But nothing was of any avail. Two or three times, during these years, he was carried to the sanctuary, having a chair set for him in the aisle, with proper fixtures, he being unable to sit as other people sat. The last time was on a communion day, that he might enjoy once more the fellowship of his beloved brethren and sisters at the Lord's table. A very few times, during these early years, he went to the house of a relative or friend, being aided into a carriage, and out of it, by two or three individuals, who mainly bore him in their arms.

These incidents afforded a little relief from absolute confinement. But even these soon ceased, and the confinement, first to the house, and then to the chamber, was complete. And it was marked with many trying circumstances. For the whole period of thirty-eight years, he never put off, or put on, his clothes, nor even lifted a foot, with-

out assistance ;—assistance rendered mainly by a SISTER, a little older than himself, and whose attentions to him were as assiduous, as his own necessities were remarkable.* His limbs, especially at the joints, were drawn out of shape and distorted by his disease ; his feet were swollen, though his general frame was emaciated ; his hands were so drawn up by extreme pain, that it was with much difficulty he could hold a small book or a pen—in the latter years not at all ; his neck was stiff, so that he could turn his head in but the slightest degree. He sat, or lay, encased in flannels, and his strength almost entirely destroyed. He was the subject of constant pains, till pains became a second nature. Powerful anodynes alone would give relief ; which,

* The assiduities of this sister can never be too much commended. She lived in her brother, and for him, and never seemed to think any thing a burden she was called on to do for him. He was her charge ; and she gave herself, with entireness and with great cheerfulness, to the care of him as her life's business.

however, were resorted to less and less, scarcely half the quantity being used in his latter years, that was formerly employed.

For the first twelve or thirteen years of Mr. Couch's confinement, his vision, which had always been remarkably clear and distinct, continued unimpaired. At the end of this time, a pain of great severity seized him in the eyes. This, for about two years, was the heaviest part of the affliction he was called to bear. His eyes could endure no light, and were the seat of unceasing suffering: till, at length, the sight was almost wholly destroyed. For more than twenty years, he was able only to discover very dimly some of the forms before him, without ever distinguishing countenances or features, or enjoying any of the solid advantages of vision. The language of Milton, with little abatement, he could make his own :

“ Thus with the year

Seasons return ; but not to me returns

Day, or the sweet approach of e'en or morn

Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,

Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine ”

Par. l. B. iii.

Even the dim vision of Mr. Couch, however, discerning but the most shadowy forms, set him at a great remove from the deep gloom of total blindness. To have only this assurance of the LIGHT, was a great source of comfort and encouragement to him, amidst his many trials.

In the absence of vision, his hearing became very acute. He would distinguish his friends, who were in the habit of calling, by their step on the stairs in ascending to his room. Even their rap at the door, would acquaint him often beforehand, who was the individual he was about to see.

CHAPTER V.

“Do thyself no harm.”— [Acts xvi : 28.]

It has been already signified, that the sufferings which Mr. Couch endured were, in part, at least, the fruit of his own indiscretion, of his own want of care of himself at the beginning of his active life. While yet working at his trade, besides the early and late hours, as already mentioned, he imbibed the idea, that, for him, four hours in his twenty-four were sufficient to be devoted to sleep. Hence, not unfrequently, considerable portions of the night were employed by him in secret devotion : sometimes in the chamber ; sometimes abroad in the open air — at the burying-ground, or other solitary place, favoring deep religious impression. The lines uttered of our Savior, —

“Cold mountains and the midnight air
Witnessed the fervor of thy prayer,” &c.—

had a charm for him, and it seemed to him becoming in a disciple, to attempt to imitate the example of his Lord.

When he entered upon labors more appropriately ministerial, we have seen, he was equally unsparing of himself. When remonstrated with, and warned that he was doing himself injury, he was accustomed to reply, that "He thought it likely he should get through soon, but that he had rather *wear* out than *rust* out;" and then would urge on again his imprudent course. For this temerity and want of a right estimate of things he paid a great price. Near FORTY YEARS of suffering was the penalty of the violated law which he had so fearfully ignored and broken! We cannot die when we please, nor rise above the appointed conditions of our existence. And God may hold us to the consequences of our actions much longer than we, when we are performing them, imagine.

Mr. Couch himself often dwelt on this general subject in subsequent life. He clearly saw his error, and bitterly deplored

it, and warned young ministers particularly, and with great earnestness, when he saw the warning needed, against a course which, to him, had proved so disastrous. There is, indeed, he well knew, an error on the other side : an excessive carefulness of one's self ; a kind of sentimental delicacy, that fears a true apostolic earnestness : that shrinks from grappling boldly with the grand evils of the time, and studies unduly its own ease and comfort. But while this error should be sedulously avoided, there should be, on the other hand, equal care, not to throw life needlessly away. No man has a right, in ordinary circumstances, to undermine his constitution by excessive labors, or inconsiderate exposures, and thus bring himself to a premature grave, or disable himself ever after for active usefulness in the world. But God forgives our follies and mistakes, when repented of before him. So he did in the case of his suffering servant, of whom we are speaking, and overruled the affliction that followed, for his own glory, and the good of the sufferer, and many others.

CHAPTER VI.

"Thy vows are upon me, O God." — [Ps. lvi : 12.

Mr. Couch, even through all his confinement, viewed himself as a public man. When he gave himself to the ministry, he gave himself to an OFFICE, high and sacred in his eyes : and though he was never *ordained* strictly according to the forms in use, yet was his consecration of himself so earnest and full, and the recognition of him by other ministers and churches so cordial and decided, and the approving testimony of the Divine Spirit owning his labors so marked and precious to him, that he wished ever to retain the position in which he had, he conceived, been virtually placed. • The idea, as a whole, was one of great value to him.

Mr. Couch, from the beginning, was careful in his scrutiny of his motives of action. He believed that he had given himself to

the ministry for the glory of God, and the good of the world. The necessity of this motive was ever much with him : as expressed in a letter to a friend, " That you may have the comfort of knowing, and *being sure*, that your motives are solely for the glory of God." This was the basis of his private Christian life, and he endeavored to make it the basis of his public acts, and to carry it also into his life of confinement and suffering. This it was which shone out in his temporary illness at Alna.* And this gave life and power to the longer scene of suffering to which he was appointed. As one of his early and long-observing friends has expressed it : " Deprived of the privilege of preaching in public, or visiting from house to house, he preached loudly in his chamber, and was, manifestly, blessed not a little in his labors there."

The poet has sung :

" The chamber where the good man meets his fate
Is privileged beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life, quite in the verge of heaven,"

* See pp. 44 and 45.

Such was the chamber of the subject of our narrative for nearly forty years : for during that whole period he viewed himself, and was viewed by others, as, in some sense, a dying man.

Of Mr. Couch's life of confinement, it has been already observed, that he had uncommonly clear views of his sufferings, and of sufferings generally, as constituting a part of the divine plan, ordained alike for the good of the sufferer, and for great ends of public utility. The illustrations of truth, and the moral impressions to be made on beholders, by means of suffering, were, in his view, along with personal benefit, a great element in the divine economy of the world. And this, more than any thing, it was, that sustained him under the severe trials to which he was appointed. This doctrine filled his mind with some of the grandest thoughts ; made him feel that his life, though shut up within a narrow chamber, was yet, in fact, connected with the grand whole around him, and with all succeeding duration. If he experienced pain, and suffered, in a sense,

the loss of all things, it was for a great end, which he believed would yet be revealed as worthy of God, and promotive of the interests of his kingdom. Need it surprise us, that he found in these views some of his choicest comforts and supports under the heavy burdens laid upon him? While he had yet some faint hope of relief and restoration, he said : “ God can, and if it be best, he will restore me ; otherwise, I do not desire it. It is a pleasant duty, submissively to bow before God, and give up our will, in all things, to him.” The first concern of Mr. Couch, therefore, was to *suffer rightly*. This was his mission, to *suffer*. And he would *suffer rightly*.

It may well be supposed, that a man of Mr. Couch’s temperament—his character fitting him for the active, rather than the passive graces—should have found it difficult, at first, to bear the yoke of affliction with patience. And doubtless failures sometimes marked his way, especially in its earlier stages. It is to be observed, however, in relation to this matter, that Mr.

Couch's *manner* sometimes made him wrongly interpreted. He was bold and strong in his expressions, and not unfrequently inclined to paradox. In the earlier days of his illness especially he was often expressing his wish to depart—and sometimes it would seem impatiently. When intelligence was brought him of the death of acquaintances, one and another, he would wonder why it should be so, that others could die, but he could not. “Every body can die but me!” To which the faithful sister would reply, “Paul, you will never die, till you are willing to live.” The following incident is of similar complexion. On one occasion, the Rev. Mr. Noyes, who had, for a time, been his theological teacher, entered his room, and, approaching his bed-side, said familiarly, “Well, Paul, how do you do?” “Oh, sir,” said Paul, “if my head was off, I should be well enough!” alluding to the terrible pain he had constantly in his head and stiff neck. Expressions of this kind, in his lips, it is believed, were rather *in his way* — the fruit of his peculiarity — than any real de-

cided complaint of the providence of God. In the latter years of his life, such language was less frequent, and uttered, if uttered at all, in a milder tone : and, in all respects, he manifested a much more subdued and child-like disposition. Mr. Couch suffered, indeed, in a manly way. He did not faint and sink under his burdens. He breasted the billows nobly. He had good courage. He rested on great truths, and on God : and God helped him, and gave him acquiescence in his will, and triumph over the pain. Considering the greatness of his sufferings, and the long continuance of them, it is truly wonderful, with what cheerfulness and resignation he bore them. For thirty-eight years, he was like the bush that “burned with fire, and yet was not consumed.”

In another respect Mr. Couch was remarkable in connexion with his sufferings. He was never inclined to make his sufferings a subject of protracted conversation. In this he differed from many. What affects us, we think must equally interest others. Standing invalids and sufferers hence often

fall into the habit of talking excessively of their maladies. There are some, of whom you can scarce inquire *how they do*, but you must hear in reply a long description of their aches and pains, and this repeated as often as you visit them. Our friend had no relish for this. To the inquiry after his health, his reply was generally very brief; often like the following: "Oh, full of pain as I can live!" and he would then pass immediately to other topics. He was unwilling, also, that the family should entertain visitors with protracted accounts of his daily sufferings. He thought there should be more profitable conversation.

CHAPTER VII.

“ And behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.” — [Exod. iii : 2.

Mr. Couch was a man of strong original powers of mind. His education, as we have seen, was limited ; but it was sufficient to set those powers in vigorous motion. He was eminently a self-made man, and was always eminently himself. His memory was tenacious. In the earlier years of his confinement, he committed to memory the whole of Young's Night Thoughts ; and, as wearisome nights were appointed to him, he would often beguile the tedious hours, as he lay alone, by repeating passages of that grand and inestimable work, and in prayer. His mind, though ardent, was yet well-balanced ; — was a mind of good proportions.

Mr. Couch was remarkable for the clearness and comprehension of his views of the fundamental doctrines of religion. He had

very exalted conceptions of God, and of the government of God. He had deep views of sin, as opposition to God, and the welfare of the universe. He gave the highest honor to Christ, as a Divine and glorious Savior; and attached the highest importance to his atoning sacrifice for the sins of men. He honored the Holy Spirit, and saw and felt the necessity of the Spirit's influences in order to eternal life. No man moves in the right direction, without the Spirit's breathing upon his heart. These doctrines, and others kindred to them, constituting what is generally called the Evangelical system, he held in the very highest esteem. He held them, not as empty speculations, but as truths of the utmost practical importance.

In his theological views, and in his general habits of thought and feeling, Mr. Couch belonged rather to the party of progress, than to that of undue conservatism; — not, however, a blind and unintelligent progress. His own belief was too firmly fixed, to be easily shaken. His doctrinal views were of an elevated tone, — in gen-

eral, what would be deemed of the strongest character. He formed his judgments rapidly, yet not without care; and his mind moved steadily and vigorously along, with the progress of the world. He loved knowledge — secular knowledge, such as is adapted to useful — as well as that pertaining to higher themes. He had a liberal mind, and kept it conversant with high and liberal things. He read much, while his eye-sight allowed it. And, after his vision failed him, many were the friends who devoted time cheerfully to read to him the publications of the day, as well as many standard and profounder works. Thus he kept his mind in a course of improvement: which was a great aid to him in struggling under the heavy burdens he was appointed to bear. Truth, and the God of truth, are always the support of the upright in heart.

CHAPTER VIII.

“Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the fires?”—[Isa. xxiv : 15.

But though Mr. Couch's mission was eminently that of *suffering*, he yet by no means ceased to make contributions to the cause of Christ by such activities as were still within his ability.

From the beginning of his confinement, he uniformly and very faithfully maintained family religion and worship, till within a few of his last years, when his debility became so great that he could not longer perform this service. Though he had not a family of his own, yet he had a separate establishment, the sister before mentioned, and usually one or two young persons, his relatives, with himself, constituting the household. He believed in the Covenant respecting families. And a strength and deep se-

riousness ever marked his family devotions.

The little band of brothers, which he had aided to form, augmented from time to time by new members, as well as diminished by the death or removal of old ones, held frequent meetings in his chamber, till near the close of his life. These meetings were employed in prayer and praise, and religious remark and discussion. The discussions often involved some of the higher doctrines of religion. The little fraternity were lovers of doctrine. Sometimes Mr. Couch, before he was disabled from holding a pen, would write a brief essay on some point of interest, and read it to the meeting, which would usually furnish new themes for remark. These meetings were highly interesting and improving. The brotherly attachment which existed within this circle, was a very striking feature of its character. Commenced in youth, it seemed to strengthen in every bosom, with growing years. Some of the members, who lived within convenient distance, were in the habit of visiting their afflicted brother nearly every

day, a short season after dinner. Two or more frequently thus meeting, prayer usually followed. When any one returned from a journey, or one residing abroad visited the place, one of the first things was, "to see brother Couch." Strangers were attracted to his chamber, that they might see a signal sufferer, and witness the supports of grace which he found in the furnace of affliction ; and usually they went away impressed and quickened in a manner favorable to their highest interests.

Besides the meetings and occasions now mentioned, others of a more formal character were frequently had in the same place : sometimes prayer meetings for Christians alone ; sometimes others, inclined, being admitted with them. Of these meetings, Mr. Couch assumed the chief management ; reading, while his sight was continued ; leading in prayer often, though he could not rise from his seat ; and leading also in the singing, which he did with much spirit and animation. The songs of Zion were no small solace to him in his trials, and his sick room

was one of praise, as well as prayer. In general, the same ardor which had marked his course abroad in health, now appeared in his sick chamber. He felt himself a public man still, and wished to carry through, as far as practicable, the duties appropriate to his public character. Individuals of serious minds, — inquirers, or young converts, — often visited him, to converse with him about points that troubled them ; to get a solution of their doubts, a clearing up of their difficulties ; to obtain assistance in finding the right way, or in walking in it safely when found. He was faithful and skilful as an adviser. And many were the cases in which benefit was obtained from his counsel. The burdened went away relieved ; the wavering confirmed. From his upper room, of weakness and pain, strength was derived for the duties and trials of the Christian life abroad.

He embraced the world in his views and desires. He sympathized strongly with the suffering and needy ; and often, when the case of such was related to him, did he in-

terest himself in their behalf, and from some of his more able friends obtain for them the desired relief. The young among his own relatives received much of his thought and care, and to some of them he was particularly beneficial.* He entered into the valuable reforms and moral enterprises of the day. He was a friend to the temperance cause. He sighed over the oppressions that exist, and prayed for the emancipation of the slave. The missionary cause, which, about this time rising into notice in the country, awakened its most thrilling thoughts, lay near his heart. With those thoughts and movements he sympathized most fully. During no small part of his confinement, he had charity-boxes for the aid of missions, and education, and Bible and tract societies, standing in his room; and considerable sums were thus collected

* A promising nephew he took under his own charge as an adopted son; and by counsel, and other means, aided him into the ministry. He is now filling one of the important posts on the heights of Zion.

by him, from his numerous visitors, for these benevolent objects.

In a letter from Mr. Couch to Dr. Woods, his former theological teacher, his earnest Christian spirit shines out in a manner strikingly characteristic. A part of this letter the reader will not be displeased to see.—“Newburyport, Sept. 12, 1818. My Dear and Rev. Father in Christ:—Having been very ill (with a cholera) for more than forty days, I am now pressed with gracious obligation for recovery, insomuch that I am able to address a line to you. I hope, dear sir, that you, and all dear to you, are in good health, and enjoying all spiritual blessings. The blessed news from Capt. Paul Titcomb, I doubt not, has gladdened your heart, as it has the hearts of many, causing them to leap for joy.* O the wonders of God’s marvelous love to a dead and lost world! God be praised for the rich displays of his unspeakable grace in saving some who do busi-

* Capt. Titcomb, on an India voyage, had a precious revival of religion on board his vessel.

ness upon the great waters. I received a letter from Calcutta, dated 30th April, 1818, which states the number of hopeful converts to be seven, and all the other part of the ship's company to be serious, and very attentive to reading the scriptures and good books, and to religious meetings. O let us give glory to God our Savior! And shall we not see greater things than these? I believe greater, and still greater things, would have been wrought, if the church had been full in her expectation, according to the fulness of the promise of the faithfulness of God. Has he not said to Zion, that he will fill her whole desire, regulated by his word? And can we ask in *faith* what we do *not* expect?

“May God fill and greatly bless your nursery of young men, who are designed to be ‘angels of the churches,’ and whose pinions you, under him, are forming, with which they are to ‘fly through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth;’ and whose now tender voices you are preparing for ‘that

blast of the great trumpet which shall soon shake the seat of the beast, with old Satan, into the bottomless pit !' Give them that fulness of expectation which the promises of God warrant and ought to inspire, and grant them to triumph over all opposition ! And, my dear sir, if they who turn many to righteousness 'shall shine as the stars,' what shall they resemble who prepare those very stars to shine in their courses ?

"As my nephew has a vacation of a week from school, I remember your very kind invitation to him to come up to the pleasant hill ; and as a good opportunity offers for him to go, I send him to spend a few days with you in your dear family. I hope it will not occasion you inconvenience. I am very confident that this visit will be of great benefit to him. O that I may please God, my very dear sir, to bless thee to Paul, jr., as he has blessed thee to me, who am less than the least of all his friends, if indeed I am in any degree his friend.

"Do, dear sir, remember me in your prayers, and forget not my dear boy.

"Yours truly, P. COUCH."

I may insert here a few brief notices of his sick chamber, from other hands, enlarging a little on some of the points already stated. The following is from a friend, a member of the same religious society with Mr. Couch, though considerably younger, at that time serious minded, and often visiting Mr. C. for his spiritual counsel — Rev. Isaac Rogers, of Farmington, Maine. In a letter recently received, Mr. Rogers says: "My recollections of Mr. Couch are of the most interesting character. I think of him, as he was lying on that bed of pain, when I was a young man, and when, evening after evening, I used, after the labors of the day were over, to call in to see him, in order to 'hear of heaven and learn the way.' For at that time my mind was deeply concerned in reference to its state before God, and I felt that I could look to Mr. C. as a safe spiritual counsellor. And I can truly say, that he was made of signal benefit to me; and that, if I was not as one 'new born,' I was as one 'truly nourished,' in that sick chamber; where this good man, after years of

painful suffering, 'met his fate;' and which was emphatically 'quite on the verge of heaven.' It was an antepast often of that 'better land,' to hear him pray, and sing, as well as converse on the things of the kingdom of God. Such prayers I have seldom heard, as those that flowed from his heart. They seemed so near the throne of grace and glory, and brought you so near to heavenly scenes, that you would love to linger long under the blessed sound. Then his singing was equally striking. Particularly have I often heard him sing that hymn of Watts, (H. 13, B. 3) —

'How sweet and awful is the place
With Christ within the door,' &c.,

to the old tune of "The Feast," sometimes by himself alone, and sometimes with others joining, in strains so sweet and heavenly, that even now the recollection does not fail to thrill my soul. He had such thorough knowledge of the Bible and of systematic divinity, that it was 'a feast of fat things' to the inquiring mind to be often with him

in that hallowed and consecrated chamber. He had a great memory — comprehensive and tenacious. I have heard him repeat, not only hundreds of lines, but book after book, of Young's Night Thoughts, which was one of his favorites. And, in fact, whatever he read, or heard read, he remembered in a remarkable degree and with great accuracy. He also was possessed, through his sufferings, of a strong and living faith in all the rich promises of the covenant of grace. As an illustration, I well remember his confident expressions in reference to his nephew, and namesake, whom he had adopted. Before his conversion to Christ, Mr. Couch was, by the aid of friends, helping him to an education. Said he to me one day, 'I have given him up to God, and am daily praying for his conversion, and I verily believe that it will take place, and that he will actually become a minister of Christ.' And this is what the event has proved."

Rev. Mr. Mitchell, who has already borne testimony of Mr. Couch's missionary labors, has a passage in relation to his sick cham-

ber, in which the reader will feel an interest. "When a member of the Seminary at Andover," says Mr. M., "I visited, several times, this most patient and cheerful sufferer. He sat there in his easy chair, as an oracle. The experienced Christian, in seasons of darkness and perplexity, came to him for advice. The anxious inquirer came to him to ask what he should do to be saved. The student in theology loved to hear him explain the deep mysteries of the kingdom of God. I called once with Dr. L——, and at another time with my beloved classmate, Gallaudet; and never shall I forget the manner of our friend, or the eagerness and pleasure with which we listened to him, as he expounded Bible doctrines, and revealed to us the experimental knowledge of a tried and faithful Christian. I think of him now as one eminently taught in the Holy Scriptures, and 'apt to teach' the inquirer after truth. Though deeply sympathizing with him in his *bonds* and imprisonment, which he gained by his zealous devotion to the service of Christ, I love to think of his cheer-

ful, animated countenance, shining like that of Moses, by reason of his familiar intercourse with heaven."

Mr. Bayley has a word, on the point now before us, in keeping with the above. "I saw him several times in his chamber," says Mr. B., "in circumstances very trying, but his soul was not bound. He was pleasant, inquisitive about the house of God, and deeply interested in the religious movements of the day, in which he was well posted." His chamber was a Bethel: and these prayers were often offered. "Happy man, made perfect through sufferings, now with his Lord!"

In the autumn of 1815, the second company of missionaries sent forth by the American Board, sailed for their destination in India, from Newburyport. They were *nine* in number, — Messrs. Richards, Poor, Bardwell, Meigs, with their wives, and Edward Warren. Some days' detention of the vessel, beyond its appointed time for sailing, gave them a longer stay in the place than they had expected. It is not to be supposed,

that, under the circumstances, they would fail to become acquainted with a Christian sufferer such as Mr. Couch. They found him of kindred spirit with themselves ; often visited him ; met together in his room several times for prayer ; and it is not too much to believe that, from his sick chamber they derived fresh courage and strength for the great work before them. When Dr. Poor returned to this country on a visit, in 1849, and came to the place of his former embarkation, one of his early enquiries was in regard to Mr. Couch : of whom he retained lively and interested recollections, though the lapse of time had been THIRTY-FOUR years.* At a later date, another of this missionary company† has given his recollections of Mr. Couch, in a manner very consonant with the things stated in the preceding pages of this Memoir. Referring to the delay of the ship in sailing, he says : “ During

* Mr. C. had been more than seven years in his grave.

† Rev. Horatio Bardwell, D. D., of Oxford, Mass.

these days of detention, the missionaries became acquainted with Mr. Couch, who was then confined to his bed, and in constant pain night and day. But I do not remember that he ever spoke of his sufferings, unless in reply to a definite question on the subject. There was much in the person and character of Mr. C. that was suited to make a deep impression on the mind of a stranger. His person large and muscular"—he became afterwards emaciated—"his features prominent, manly and commanding, his mind vigorous and well stored with Christian knowledge, and his heart earnestly devoted to right things, no one could fail to see in him an eminent servant of God. The features of his piety were not emotional, but, like the stern principles of his theology, they were definite, bold and uncompromising. Faith in God was distinguished among the Christian graces, as they appeared in him. It was by this, that to him the truths revealed and the things hoped for, had a *real* and *living* existence, and bore him above the severe pains of the body. — More than forty

years have passed, and yet the recollections of those hallowed prayer-meetings in Mr. C.'s room, are fresh in my mind. I seem now to see his manly form, sustained by pillows in nearly a sitting posture, and to hear his strong utterances of faith and hope in Israel's God. I remember, too, with what admiration he spoke of the wisdom and the goodness of God in the scheme of human redemption, and with what joy (he said) he would go to the ends of the earth in the service of Christ, if God would but enable him and send him. — No one scene connected with the trying hour of our departure was more suited to give firmness to our faith and hope, in the self-denials and toils of the missionary work, than our frequent meetings for conference and prayer in the room of this servant of Christ."

CHAPTER 'IX.

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end." — [Heb. iii : 14.

It will be perceived, from the foregoing chapters, that the subject of this brief Memoir was fitted, by the natural elements of his character, to make a strong impression on the minds of his fellow men. Even in early youth this was apparent. He was ardent, impulsive, and controlling among his associates. As years advanced, and in his first religious experience, and in the short term of activity he was permitted to enjoy, this same characteristic continued to be strikingly manifest. And even when the hand of suffering was laid upon him, and for near forty years he had felt its pressure, still the great energy of his character remained but little impaired.

It was but a few weeks before Mr. Couch's

death, that decided marks of mental decay were manifested in him. Well does the writer recollect the impression made on him when first these indications appeared, on entering his room. It cannot be said that the eye had lost its fire ; for that had been all but quenched for many years, and was now, as for a long time, guarded by screens and green spectacles. But still the power of the destroyer was showing the beginning of his work. The muscles of the face were relaxed. The motion of the hand was feeble. The tone of the voice indicated lassitude. The whole air and manner showed an incipient yielding of a strong constitution and a strong mind, under the long continued attacks that had been made upon them. Must this sufferer, who has withstood so long, and so much, and seemed triumphant in the very jaws of the devourer, at length bow, and submit to the power that conquers all ? The thought was sad. Yet to the sufferer, such termination would be gain. He was prepared to meet it. He had been used for Heaven's glory, and would be still.

It may have been expected by those who knew the case, that this great sufferer would die in a manner consonant with his earnest character, — triumphing visibly over the destroyer, and his tongue filled with rapturous praise. But so divine wisdom had not appointed respecting him. He had borne his testimony before. His chamber, for many years, had been, in some sense, a dying chamber. He had spoken from it, as few men have spoken under such circumstances. Was any thing further needful, to the completeness of his life? Might it not close here, and yet be left a luminous life, for the benefit of those who had witnessed it, or might learn of it?

One can hardly fail to be reminded here, of the case of Whitefield. The anecdote is related in the *Memoirs of Whitefield*, by Dr. Gillies, p. 218, note. Toward the close of that wonderful man's life, as he was on a visit to Princeton, N. J., Dr. Finley, president of the college there, said to him: "Mr. Whitefield, I hope it will be very long before you will be called home, but when that

event shall arrive, I should be glad to hear the noble testimony you will bear for God." "You would be disappointed, doctor," said Whitefield, "I shall die silent. It has pleased God to enable me to bear so many testimonies for him during my life, that he will require none from me when I die. No, no," he continued, "it is your dumb Christians, that have walked in fear and darkness, and thereby been unable to bear a testimony for God during their lives, that he compels to speak out for him on their death beds." Whitefield's departure was as he himself had said.

And, without any prediction known, so, substantially, was the departure of Mr. Couch. He continued gradually to sink, and more and more gradually, till death, in a very few days, closed the scene. An invisible, silent, mysterious power, seemed to envelop him, and take him away. He died March 19th, 1842 : aged 64.

CHAPTER X.

"The eye of him that hath seen me, shall see me no more." Job, vii: 8.

Few men have been ordained to a severer life-battle, than Mr. Couch. And few have met their appointed lot, more worthily. His sufferings, indeed, killed him; but they did not conquer him. He bore manfully the burden, under which he sank to rest. He bore it, sustained by the great ideas of religious truth, which he cherished; aided and cheered by such services as he could yet render to the cause of Christ; and we may not doubt, upheld by the special presence and grace of that Almighty Spirit from whom are all good gifts.

The religion of Mr. Couch, it will be seen, was a practical, and not a mere theoretical religion. All along through life, from the brief period of his activity to the close of

his protracted and painful course, he appeared habitually, the man of prayer, the man of faith, the man of Christian sympathies and comprehensive benevolence, the man of ready obedience. He shone as one in whom strong elements of character were controlled by the power of grace.

“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God,” says the apostle; which may have application to the case before us, and to that of many pious sufferers. In their affliction is severity; severity that appears fearful. God appoints them great afflictions. He looks steadily and unrelentingly on while they suffer. He perseveres in his course. He lightens not his hand for their tears. He alters not his purpose for their groaning. In the heavy, dark night, he permits them to see no light this side the grave. But in the result, there is goodness. The sufferers are “purified and made white.” The last moral obliquities are wrought out of their souls. The last stains are removed. The image of the Savior within them is rendered complete.

As has been beautifully sung of the
"GREAT REFINER : "*

'Tis good to think how well he knows
The silver's power to bear
The ordeal to which it goes ;
And that, with skill and care,
He'll take it from the fire, when fit
For his own hand to polish it.

'Tis blessedness to know that he
The piece he has begun
Will not forsake, till he can see,
To prove the work well done,
An image, by its brightness shown,
The perfect likeness of his own.

[Miss H. F. Gould.

These stanzas are from a fine piece by the hand of this gifted authoress ; and by permission, they are quoted here with the greater satisfaction, as the piece is one which Mr. Couch himself often read, (or heard read,) and admired, and with which he encouraged himself in the sharp conflicts he was called to endure.

* Mal. iii : 3. " He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver.

Although Mr. Couch attracted much attention, he was not emulous of human applause, and least of all desired posthumous praise. A few years before his death, he required his papers to be brought him ; which, after he had examined them, he committed to the flames ; and, at the same time, gave strict injunction, that nothing should be written of him after his decease. His right to lay an inhibition thus on the usefulness of his own example, may certainly be questioned. What the grace of God has wrought in a man, or wrought by him on others, it is not his to dispose of, in such a way as to rob God of the praise. The church has a right to know these things, for its own encouragement. The cause of Christ has a claim for their due manifestation. And to withhold them is to hide the light "under a bushel, or under a bed," and prevent the good effects which might otherwise be realized ; contrary to the great Master's teaching. The only care needful is, that no injustice be done ; that a fair picture be given.*

* Virgil, the great Roman poet, is a case in point

Another thing, perhaps, should be mentioned, to the praise of the Divine promise. Mr. Couch had but slender means to meet such a life-scene as that appointed him. But through the ever-working Providence, which has said of the righteous,—“bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure:” “no good thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly;” friends were raised up, as the occasion required, who were most ready, and seemed to feel it a privilege, to render the needful aid. They took upon them cheerfully the burdens of this suffering servant of God, and “so fulfilled the

“It is well known that after having bestowed the labor of twelve years on his immortal poem (the *Æneid*), the conviction which he felt of its imperfection determined him, in his last moments, to order it to be committed to the flames; and it was only by a breach of his solemn testamentary injunction, that this work has been preserved for the admiration of posterity.” “The Divine Augustus forbade, contrary the modesty of his will, that the songs of Virgil should be burned; so that it happened to the bard that he received greater honor, than he would if he had himself approved his own songs.” Pliny, lib. vii. ch. 30. Roscoe’s *Leo X.* vol. i. p. 160.

law of Christ." Strangers also, calling, often added a benefaction. It is remarkable, that, for near forty years, this interest in the sufferer should not have tired, nor these streams have ceased to flow. When one fountain was closed, another was opened to supply its place.

A statement of this matter, for a single year, from Mr. Couch himself, will not be out of place here. The year selected is 1810,—of which the account is the fullest that has been discovered. It begins in business style.

"PAUL COUCH, IN ACCOUNT WITH THE LORD'S STEWARDS."

Forty different dates are made through the year, with sums annexed of five dollars and under, amounting in all to eighty-three dollars and upwards; besides ninety dollars alluded to, not included in this specific account.

"Thus dear Brethren," he says, "you see the goodness and mercy of the Lord, and of His friends in me, as well as His judgments. Surely I have reason to sing of mercy as

well as of judgment. Notwithstanding the Lord 'has fed me with the bread of tears, and given me tears to drink in great measure,' yet I have reason to say, 'O Lord, Thou hast dealt *well* with Thy servant.' 'I will praise Thee, O, Lord.' 'And dear brethren, I desire to tender to you *all*, but more particularly to those whose signatures are above, my most fervent thanks for your attentions and kindnesses. And as a cup of cold water, given with gospel motives, will meet the gospel reward, you may rest assured that your kindness to me, the meanest of all, with the same motives, will meet from the lips of our common Lord, the blessed award recorded in the 25th of Matthew: 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' And Oh! that this may be the happy case of us all. Amen.

Yours, P. C."

To which is added the following: "My brethren, you will see by this paper, how much our common Lord has given me from His various banks. The stewards of the

Lord have supplied me with \$83 10. If you add \$90 to that, you will see, (I believe), our *whole* expenditures for the past year, except our wood. Our family has consisted of four; and you know we have some company. I will assure you that a full *thirtieth* of all our income has been devoted to the Lord. I wish you all a happy new year, and the constant presence of Him who dwells in the bush. P. C." Alluding, probably, to himself, who was constantly in the fire, and was yet not consumed.

Mr. Couch's benefactors have most of them departed, as well as himself. Some of them before him, and some of them after him;—and if they are permitted to join each other now, and mingle together in the service and worship there, as they delighted often to do here, they must constitute a bright company in the spirit-land. He regrets not his sufferings now. They regret not the aid they gave him, in bearing his heavy burdens.

CHAPTER XI.

“Whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation; Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.” Heb. xiii : 7, 8.

Sufferers may receive instruction from the example of Mr. Couch, as to the manner in which they should regard and bear their sufferings. Few, as already remarked, suffer, as he suffered. And few have borne sufferings, better than he bore them. Some, indeed, have suffered with more quietness of spirit; because they had a nature more quiescent. But few have overcome more in themselves, and reduced a nature all strung for vigorous action, to more unquestioning submission, than he.

The doctrine of suffering,—That it is appointed by Infinite wisdom and goodness, for grand purposes of public utility, as well as for the sufferer’s own particular benefit, is the true doctrine. This sustained him un-

der his great burdens ; and, truly embraced, will sustain all sufferers in equanimity and peace. It fills the mind with great ideas ; it gives the heart sweet trust in God. And thus, though it cannot annihilate pain, yet it can soften its intensity ; it can raise the soul, in a good measure, above its power ; it can so connect the sufferer with the glory of God, and with the results of suffering which eternity will reveal, that he will now forget himself, and the ills of his condition, in the ineffable glories, to which this condition itself is to give rise.

Another thing sufferers should do. They should keep themselves connected, as far as practicable, with the activities—the benevolent and religious activities—of the world around them. The sufferer who most goes out of himself ; who, as his circumstances allow, enters most earnestly into the general enterprises of Christian usefulness, is the one who usually best bears the burdens laid upon him. It is hard to suffer. It is a more difficult calling to be a sufferer, than to be an actor. Yet God can enable his people

to suffer rightly when he calls them to suffer; as well as enable them to act rightly, when he calls them to act. And keeping one's self connected, as far as may be, with God's great scheme of things, is not small among the means by which He accomplishes the desirable object.

Sufferers should not count it a strange thing, when they find themselves with trials laid upon them. The economy of this world requires that there be suffering, and, consequently, that there be sufferers. The illustrations of truth and grace accomplished by suffering, are equally as important as those accomplished by action. God has occasion for sufferers, as well as for actors. "I have chosen thee," He says to some, "in the furnace of affliction." And, in fact, none are exempted.

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown ;
No traveller ever reached that blessed abode,
Who found not thorn and briers in his road."

'The cup passes around, and all partake of

its contents, some more, some less. And so, what with the benefit accruing to sufferers, and the benefit accruing to beholders, the condition of the world is improved. "He chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness." He chastens us, that our graces may shine to His praise, and the good of men, in the scenes of affliction. A holy example of suffering illuminates the darkness around it; shows the world the worth of godliness; points to God, the supporter of his people, and to the home he has prepared for them, when their earthly scenes are closed.

In conclusion: sufferers should encourage themselves under their burdens in view of the recompense promised to faithful godly suffering, in the future life. Of right action, the scriptures say, "Great is its reward in heaven." Nor less can be the reward of right suffering. The sufferer shall find the fruits of it in his own character for ever, every grace shining the brighter for the fiery scenes through which he has passed. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment,

worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." He shall find the fruits of it in the benefits his bright example has been the means of imparting to others, the whole results of his right suffering on the minds of those who have witnessed it, appearing and shining around him in his high abode. The whole grand impulse which his course has produced on creation shall be there. And the recompenses of such are declared in the most glowing terms. "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." So shall submis-

sive godly sufferers be recompensed, by Him, in whose honor, and in imitation of whose example they have suffered. For so his own Spirit has taught us to say, "If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him;"—"if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." Sufferers, it would seem, will have some peculiar sympathy with Christ, having followed so nearly in His track, and some peculiar sympathies with each other, having been subjected to common discipline of so great a severity. And the whole heavenly state will probably be enjoyed by them, with a richer satisfaction, a higher rapture, for the deep seas of trial from which they emerged, in gaining their blissful, immortal position.

Apply this to the strong-minded sufferer of thirty-eight years, whose case we have reviewed. He must strike the golden harp with some peculiar rapture, with that hand lately so tremulous and powerless. He must swell the notes of redeeming love with some peculiar ecstasy, with that voice lately sink-

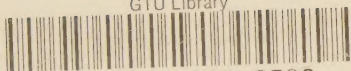
ing in faint whispers amidst the swellings of Jordan. And the same principle holds true of others. Apply it to the martyrs, and all signal sufferers of all time. What a glorious company they must constitute before the throne! Wherefore, sufferers, faint not. Bear up under your trials, and press onward to better things. God has better things for you, if you suffer rightly. It was of times of suffering that that was spoken: "I HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN, SAYING UNTO ME, WRITE, BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHICH DIE IN THE LORD FROM HENCEFORTH; YEA, SAITH THE SPIRIT, THAT THEY MAY REST FROM THEIR LABORS, AND THEIR WORKS DO FOLLOW THEM." God puts the tears of His people into His bottle. Their groans, if they come up from pious dispositions, are more regarded by Him, than the songs of angels. In all their affliction, He is afflicted with them. He looks on them in their struggles, and says: "IN YOUR PATIENCE POSSESS YE YOUR SOULS." "BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY; HOLD THAT FAST WHICH THOU HAST, THAT NO MAN TAKE THY CROWN!"

“What are these in bright array ?
This innumerable throng,
Round the altar, night and day,
Tuning their triumphant song ?
‘Worthy is the Lamb once slain,
Blessing, honor, glory, power,
Wisdom, riches, to obtain,
New dominion every hour !’

“These through fiery trials trod ;
These from great affliction came ;
Now before the throne of God,
Sealed with His eternal name,
Clad in raiment pure and white,
Victor palms in every hand
Through their great Redeemer’s might,
More than conquerors they stand.

“Hunger, thirst, disease unknown,
On immortal piety they feed ;
Them the Lamb amidst the throne,
Shall to living waters lead.
Joy and gladness banish sighs ;
Perfect love dispels their fears ;
And forever from their eyes,
God shall wipe away all tears.”

GTU Library



3 2400 00536 2508

GTU Library
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709
For renewals call (510) 649-2500
All items are subject to recall.

